

**REMARKS**

The Office Action dated November 29, 2003 has been carefully considered. Claims 4-10 have been amended. Claims 4-18 are in this application.

Claims 4 and 6-18 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 5 and 8 have been rewritten in independent form. Claims 6, 7 and 13-18 depend from independent claim 5 and claims 9 and 10 depend from independent claim 8. Accordingly, claims 4-18 are allowable.

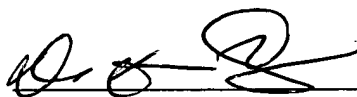
Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as not providing antecedent basis for T1. Applicants have amended claim 5 to obviate the Examiner's rejection. In particular, Applicants have amended claim 5 to positively recite a distillation step. Applicants note that T1 is recited in claim 5 as a temperature at the entrance place of the distilling column. Claim 5 has been placed in independent form and the claim provides only a first occurrence of T1. No new matter has been entered.

Applicants note that in claims 4, 5 and 8, the "(the raw material liquid) containing (meth)acrylic acid substantially free from azeotropic solvents", which are described in the preambles of their claims, has been inserted into the body of the respective claims for clarity. With regard to claims 16 and 17, the azeotropic solvents are removed before distillation, as described in the specification on page 9, lines 12-14. No new matter has been entered.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and request that all claims be allowed. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned should he believe that this would expedite prosecution of this application. It is believed that no fee is required. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-2165.

Respectfully submitted,

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Diane Dunn McKay  
Reg. No. 34,586  
Attorney for Applicant

MATHEWS, COLLINS, SHEPHERD & McKAY, P.A.  
100 Thanet Circle, Suite 306  
Princeton, NJ 08540  
Tel: 609 924 8555  
Fax: 609 924 3036